

TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTION BUILDING AND TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES IN EAST ASIA

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DOMESTIC ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS OF REGIONAL TRADE POLICY-MAKING: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF CHINA AND JAPAN

Research Objective

The research question of why Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) differ in form and scope is addressed by analyzing the role of domestic politico-economic structures. More specifically, different patterns of state-market relations are identified to assess varying degrees of capacities in shaping and participating in different forms and modes of regional economic cooperation.



Methods

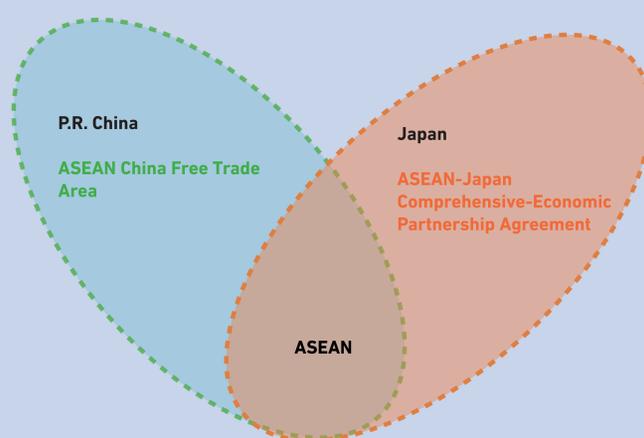
People's Republic of China and Japan are presented as compelling case studies, not only because they are two important and competitive regional initiators of PTAs but more importantly due to their differences in political systems and state-market relations. The method of process-tracing will be used to identify relevant actors as well as the institutional settings in which they operate and to qualitatively analyze the causal mechanisms underlying the negotiations and implementation of ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement and the agreements between ASEAN members and Japan as well as the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between 2000 and 2015.

Preliminary Results

Chinese PTAs reflect Chinese domestic structures consisting of a state-dominated economy but yet highly fragmented state-market relations that require a flexible and broad framework for actors to implement and utilize the agreement. In contrast, the Japanese setting allows interest groups to participate during negotiations more openly: as a result negotiations take longer but outcomes of the more comprehensive and legally sound Japanese PTAs are more aligned with utilization and complements Japan's shift from a coordinated market economy towards a more liberal 'regulatory state'. These two different models of PTAs have regional economic governance implications in the long term: while China is promoting a supplementary and informal approach, Japan is supporting a regulatory-based governance more comparable to the US or the EU and more in line with the WTO.

Aim

The aim of this PhD project is to contribute a transnational perspective to the study of regionalism from the vantage point of comparative political economy and to add to the scholarship dedicated to the intersection between comparative and international political economy. By not assuming the state to be a unitary actor and focusing instead on configurations of state-market relations, the established dichotomy of state and non-state actors in the scholarship of regionalism can be dissolved.



Regional Economic Governance among ASEAN, China and Japan

Subtheme: Transcultural Identities and Institutions: the Universal and the Local